



**Testimony of Robert A. Brex, Executive Director, Northeast Communities Against Substance Abuse**

***Concerning Governor's Bill No. 6856***

**AN ACT CONCERNING SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND OPIOID OVERDOSE PREVENTION**

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee, my name is Bob Brex, and I am the Executive Director of Northeast Communities Against Substance Abuse (NECASA), one of the thirteen Regional Action Councils that make up the Connecticut Prevention Network(CPN).

I strongly support Governor' Bill No. 6856 as I believe it will assist our communities in reducing overdose fatalities and reduce access to prescription drugs which are being misused and abused. Specifically, I support the mandated registration and use of prescribers in the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, the increase availability of Naloxone to first responders and families and increased prescriber education on the proper dispensing and prescribing of these powerful medications.

However, I would be remiss if I did not point out that the budget proposed to this session of the general assembly leaves community and general public education in a precarious situation. Connecticut's prevention infrastructure including Regional Action Councils, Youth Service Bureaus and the Governor's Prevention Partnership are all proposed to face very harmful budget reductions and will be very limited in their ability to do the public outreach necessary to advance public knowledge and response to this serious problem. In the past several years, NECASA and the other member agencies of CPN have trained 580 teacher and educators on Prescription Drug Abuse; trained an additional 350 coaches in both schools and communities; distributed 70,000 Parent's guides to prescription Drug Abuse, 20,000 through the coaches and 50,000 in weekly newspaper inserts; and have worked with all of the Realtor's Associations in Connecticut to distribute flyers to educate those showing homes to secure medications prior to having potential buyers allowed access to bathrooms and medicine cabinets.

As a preventionist for over twenty five years, I absolutely support Governor's Bill no. 6856, but also realize that this bill cannot be a stand-alone effort and must be combined with increased community and public information outreach not decreased by hamstringing prevention services in the state.

Thank you.